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Wayside Fancies.

M. J. Sparks

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Mrs. M. J. Sparks.

WAYSIDE FANCIES

BY

MRS. M. J. SPARKS

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RANDOM THOUGHTS.

Suppose we saw at morning
All the trials of the day,
All the little cares and crosses
Waiting for us by the way;
Would our burdens be the lighter
At the setting of the sun,
On account of being shown them
Ere the day was well begun?

Supposing in the May-time,
As the blossom-scented breeze,
Fragrant with the breath of roses,
Floats among the budding trees,
We should close our eyes, unheeding
All the verdure 'neath our feet,
As we sigh to think 'twill wither
In the summer's blazing heat;

Supposing when the autumn
Spreads its wealth of fruit and flowers
We should fail to note their beauty,
Dreading bleak December's hours;
Would the stormy days of winter
Be the brighter, do you guess,
If their shadows, hovering o'er us,
Made us prize the autumn less?

If, when life is in its morning,
We could see adown the years
All the bright days and the dark ones,
All the smiles and all the tears,
Should we not miss half the roses
That, forgotten, 'round us lie
While we're grieving o'er the briers
That we'll come to bye and bye?

THE OLD RUINED CHURCH.

I have read many wonderful stories
Of grand old ruins abroad;
Of moss-covered manse or cathedral,
Where the feet of a monarch once trod;
Where the rain and the sun make sad havoc
With the beautiful wainscoted wall,
And the dark ivy mantles the turret,
Like the shades of a funeral pall.

But the old ruined church on the corner
Holds far more pathos for me,
Than any magnificent castle,
Or mouldering manse o'er the sea;
For 'twas there, when a child, I first listened
To the worship and praises of God;
'Twas there I wept o'er a father,
When they laid him to rest 'neath the sod.

At that altar the infant was christened,
The bride, in her robes of pure white,

Breathed her vows, while the angel choir listened,
In silence as solemn as night;
And often the heart of the mourner
Was freed from its burden of care,
By the thought of the Saviour's compassion—
The thought of the crown he should wear.

And many, ah, many who worshipped
Each Sabbath for years at that shrine,
Have entered the City Celestial,
And joined in the chorus divine.
Yes, often the old bell has echoed
The requiem over the dead,
While the organ's soft melody stealing,
Kept time with the pall-bearers' tread.

But now the old altar is broken,
The pulpit and Bible are gone;
The desk where God's message was spoken,
Where echoed the prayer and the song.
The moss-covered roof is still clinging
To the crumbling stones of the wall,
Yet to me the old ruin is dearer
Than any magnificent hall.

PRISONERS OF WAR.

'Twas the day before Shiloh's battle,
And the skirmish line was strewn
With the wounded, dead and dying,
While the soft April sunlight shone

Alike on the fallen warrior
Wrapped in his folds of gray,
And the hero in blue beside him,
With his life-blood ebbing away.

The shades of twilight were falling
At the close of that April day,
When a white-haired southern veteran
And a young lieutenant in gray
Were walking among the fallen;
"Look here," the lieutenant said,
"As sure as I'm a sinner,
Here's a Yankee that isn't dead!"

"Shot through the neck with a rifle,
An Iowa cavalryman.
Ah, well, my lad, I'll discharge you;
You'll not mount your charger again."
And the dashing young lieutenant
Drew his sword from its sheath by his side.
"Hold! Hold! You'd commit a murder!"
The white-haired veteran cried.

"I admit your superior office,
But the lad is a prisoner of war;
Could you thus coldly murder the boy
A mother is watching for?"
"But what can I do?" said the officer
Clad in the uniform gray,
With a single Yank, and our quarters
Sixty-four miles away?

"I cannot send a detachment back
With a single, half-dead Yank;

'Twould be a kindness to end his pain
On the hillside where he sank."
"My home is just over yonder,
Three miles or four at the best;
You can leave him there with my people
While we press on with the rest."

So the soldier in blue was carried,
Speechless and almost dead,
To the home of the rebel planter.
But his black-eyed daughter said:
"Oh Father! that dreadful Yankee
Will murder us all some day,
If ever he lives to be able,
Which is doubtful, I'm thankful to say."

So Dennis O'Neal, the young soldier,
Was sheltered and brought back to life,
In the home of the white-haired rebel,
And nursed by his daughter and wife.
But long, dreary weeks and months followed,
When he was too weak to be moved;
And the warmth of a southerner's kindness,
To the fullest extent he had proved.

But when he grew able to travel,
The tidings that he was exchanged
Were borne to the ear of the prisoner;
And the soldier boy, haggard and changed,
Went back to the Iowa prairies,—
To the home he had left long ago,
When bravely he marched to the south-land
To check the advance of the foe.

And when the battle was over
And peace smiled over our land,
When the din and roar of the cannon
Were hushed on the ocean-swept sand,
The youth, who had lain as a prisoner
Long months in that flowery land,
Came back to the home of the planter
And captured his daughter's hand.

ELOISE.

Years ago, so runs the story,
Dwelt a maiden fair to see,
Where the blue-grass fringed the river,
On the shores of Tennessee.

Dark brown hair and eyes of azure,
Rivaling the skies in hue;
Snow-white brow and cheeks where roses
Blossom with the lilies too.

Long her father had lain sleeping
'Neath the churchyard's moldering shade;
But her mother and one brother
Still were left the little maid.

Eloise, sweet southern flower,
Many a gallant suitor had,
But her faith had long been plighted
With a handsome country lad.

Conrad Lee had been her playmate,
When in childhood's sunny hours
They had wandered by the river,
Seeking mosses, ferns and flowers.

Conrad, now grown tall and manly,
Fondly loved sweet Eloise,
And the lass her heart had given
In exchange for Conrad Lee's.

Oft they whispered in the twilight,
Of the happy days in store;
Of the home they'd share together
When the cruel war was o'er.

Eloise, one summer evening,
Watched beside the garden gate
For the coming of her lover,—
Where she often used to wait.

Soon she heard his step approaching,—
Soon she saw him through the trees,
As he stepped from out the shadows,
Fondly greeted Eloise:

"Dearest," said he, clasping fondly
Both her hands within his own;
"I have something I must tell you,—
Tell you while we're here alone.

"While my country calls for soldiers,
Able-bodied men and strong,—
How can I with youth and courage
Fail to join that valiant throng?

"Can I turn an ear unheeding
To my country's call for aid?
Is my life worth more than others
That are on her altar laid?

"I've enlisted, sweetheart, surely
You would blush for me, I know,
If I staid behind while others
Braver marched to meet the foe."

Not a word spoke yet the maiden,
But her cheek grew ashen white
As she raised her eyes to Conrad's
In the moon-lit summer night.

"You are right," at length she faltered,
"I'd not have you stay behind;
I'd not have you prove a coward,—
Go! and death or victory find.

"But how soon,—when are you going?"
"We must part tonight," said he,
For tomorrow I'll be sailing,—
Sailing down the Tennessee."

Long they lingered in the moonlight,—
Each the other tried to cheer;
But their words were few and broken
As the time to part drew near.

"Eloise, you'll not forget me,
Though I fall amid the strife?
If I live I'll come to claim you,—
Eloise, my joy, my life!"

"Conrad, no; I'll not forget you.
When the battle's din is o'er,
You will find me waiting for you,—
Waiting by the river's shore."

So they parted and young Conrad
Sailed away to meet the foe;
And no braver soldier fought on
"Linden's blood-stained fields of snow,—"

Than this maiden's brave young lover,
Only "Private Conrad Lee,"
Hailing from the blue grass country,
From the shores of Tennessee.

For awhile she heard from Conrad
In the hottest of the strife,
Always true unto his colors,—
Periling for them his life.

Scanning eagerly the papers
For the list of dead or maimed,
Fearing that the name of Conrad
Might be in that column named,—

In the long list of the missing,
Eloise one morning read,—
"Conrad Lee, the Eighth Kentucky,"
On the day they were to wed.

Faded now the blushing roses
On the cheeks of Eloise,
As she watched in vain for tidings
Borne upon the southern breeze.

Two long years she watched and waited
By the shores of Tennessee,
For the coming of her lover,—
Lion-hearted Conrad Lee.

Long ere this the maiden's brother
Bidding home and friends farewell,
Bravely chose a hero's portion
'Mid the fire of shot and shell.

But the rebel's deadly musket
Wrought its fearful mission soon;
And the brave young heart was silenced
Ere his life had reached its noon.

Eloise now and her mother
Lived their shadowed lives alone;
Thinking sadly of the brightness
From their hearts forever flown.

"Daughter," said the mother gently,
As they sat at close of day,
Sat together in the twilight,
Listening to the nightbird's lay,

"Eloise, I know I'm failing,
I can feel it day by day;
And I grieve to think that you'll be
All alone when I'm away.

"All our negroes, too, have left us,
But old Caspar and Aunt Chloe;
And we've little left to live on,
Daughter, as you well may know.

"Lord Levar has asked permission
To address you, Eloise;
He has wealth and gold and silver,—
Stately castles o'er the seas.

"It would make me quite contented,
If, before I'm called to go,
I could see my daughter happy,
On her cheek the old-time glow.

"Lord Levar will call this evening
For your answer; for my sake
Will you not receive him kindly,—
Will you not his offer take?

"But I've something else to tell you,"
As the daughter fain would speak.
"Eloise, do not reproach me,—
Do not call me vain or weak.

I'm indebted to your lover,
More, far more than we can pay,
For the gold that he has sent us
Since your brother went away.

"Lord Levar, your father's cousin,
Proffered us his kindly aid,
On condition that you wed him;
Eloise, you foolish maid,

"Why do you still watch for Conrad?
Months and years have brought no word;
He is dead or you're forgotten;
Let our cousin's plea be heard!"

"Mother, you have sold your daughter,—
Sold your child, I say, for gold!
Doomed her to a life of mockery,
While her heart lies dead and cold!

"Why has all this been kept from me?
Surely I am not a child!"
"Daughter, I but tried to shield you,"
Thus she spoke in accents mild

"If 'twas wrong may God forgive me,
For I only sought your good;
And I thought you'd learn to love him,
If alone through gratitude.

"Eloise, how can I tell him
That my word has proved untrue?
We have lived upon his bounty,
But the day he comes to woo,

"You'll repulse him,—you will scorn him,
Him to whom we owe our all;
Tell me, child, must all his ardent
Pleading on a deaf ear fall?"

"Mother, no! I'll wed my cousin;
But before that day shall be,
I will tell him,—I must tell him
That I love but Conrad Lee!"

Months passed on; the fond weak mother
Slept where weeping willows are.
Yet she lived to see her daughter
Made the wife of Lord Levar.

Slowly passed the months and seasons,
Slowly crept the years along,—
As the daughter bravely, proudly
Strove to right a mother's wrong.

In a quaint old English castle,
Where the ivy dark and dim
Twining o'er the time-worn casement,
Flung its cooling shade within,—

Lord Levar one eve lay dying,
As the sunset's slanting ray
Creeping through the leafy lattice
Lit the features, ashen gray.

"Eloise," he called her softly,
"I am dying;—do not weep.
There's a wrong that must be righted
Ere I sleep the last long sleep.

"Bring me pen and paper quickly,
Quick! my hand is growing cold."
And the icy, stiffening fingers
Grasped the pen they scarce could hold.

Hurriedly he wrote a message,—
"Send it, Eloise, in haste.
I would know my work is finished
Ere the pangs of death I taste.

"Eloise, come sit beside me,
With the death dews on my brow,
I must tell you how I wronged you,
Hoping you'll forgive me now.

"Conrad, from a southern prison
Sent a message fond to you;
But I kept it, and I sent him
Word that you had proved untrue.

"All these years I've kept the secret,
Hoping that the time would be
When you loved me just as fondly
As you once loved Conrad Lee.

"Though you've ever been as faithful
And as true as wife could be,
I could see your heart was longing
For the shores of Tennessee.

"Dearest, say that you forgive me,
And I'll be content to go!"
Softly came the evening zephyrs,
Through the casement wide and low,—

As a silence fell upon them,
Broken only now and then
By the rustle of the ivy
Leaves against the window pane.

When at length she spoke, no traces
Of the anguish she had felt,
Could be told in voice or feature
As beside his bed she knelt,—

Laid her hand upon his forehead
Where the death dews gathered fast;
"You have been a loving husband,
I forgive you all the past."

Slowly crept the evening shadows
As the day died in the west;
When the vesper bells were ringing,
Lord Levar had gone to rest.

In a quiet little cottage,
On the shores of Tennessee,
In life's evening reunited
Eloise and Conrad Lee,

Breathe no word of blame or censure,
Cherish not one thought of ill;
Thankful that the flowers of autumn
Are left blooming for them still.

THE OLD LOG SCHOOLHOUSE ON THE HILL.

When children bound for school I see,
A tender mem'ry comes to me
Of an old log schoolhouse quaint and low,
Where the happy children long ago
Came thronging in at the open door,
And conned their lessons o'er and o'er.

The roof was low,—the benches rude,
The walls with ink and chalk tattooed,—
The sagging floor full oft was strown
With paper "wads" by urchins thrown;
The windows high,—the panes so small
We saw the sky, and that was all!

The cedar pail beside the door
Must be replenished o'er and o'er;
The larger girls, and boys, too,
Right willing were this task to do.
And from the mossy, rock-walled well
The old sweep slowly rose and fell.

In childish awe I've often stood
And wondered how the old sweep could
Draw such a heavy bucket-full,
Without a hand to lift or pull;
And leaning o'er the mossy brink
Of that fern-grown curb I used to think

No other well could ever hold
Water so clear,—so icy cold.
The mossy rocks lay cool between
A ferny lattice work of green;
And from the water I could see
A childish face gaze up at me.

Between the well and schoolhouse lay
A leaf-strewn path of colors gay,
And brown leaves flitting to and fro,
Ere fell the first soft flakes of snow,
In rustling tones the story told
Of flowers slain by winter's cold.

But years must come and years must go,
As the stream of time with ceaseless flow
Brings the changes that make us glad,
As well as the changes that make us sad;
And the old schoolhouse so quaint and low,
Has passed away with the "long ago."

A modern structure, fair to see,
Supplants the one so dear to me;
And the merry children, where are they
Who 'round the old house used to play?
Some have settled not far away,
And year by year their children play,

In the self-same nooks *we* used to know
Five and twenty years ago.
Some have sought in other lands
The fame and fortune wealth commands,
While some, alas, are sleeping low
Where the ivy and the myrtle grow!

With folded hands and quiet feet,
Life's lesson learned, their rest is sweet!
E'en though the swift years glide away
Until my hair is silver-gray,—
I'll hold in fond remembrance still
The old log schoolhouse on the hill.

TWO LITTLE ONES.

Two little ones played together
  Under the maple trees,—
Gath'ring the bright-hued leaflets
  Strewn by the autumn breeze.

Over the golden ringlets,
  Over the braids of brown,
The slanting sunbeams glistened
  Like the glory of a crown.

And the laughing little maidens,
Happy as they could be
Buried each one the other
In the leaves 'neath the maple tree.

But ah! when the next September
With its wealth of red and gold
Kissed the maple on the hillside
And the autumn winds grew cold,

Only one little maiden
Played 'neath the maple tree,
And all that was left of my darling
Was a sad, sweet memory.

For ere she had known life's sorrow,
And ere she had known life's sin,—
The pearly gates swung open,
And my little one passed in.

In the bitterness of sorrow
It wounded my heart to see
The lass with the golden ringlets
Under the maple tree.

And I envied, alas, my neighbor
Whose child was left to her still,
While mine was asleep in her casket
In a little green mound on the hill.

But years have passed on and I thank Him
For taking my lamb to the fold,
While my heart-broken neighbor is weeping
O'er the maid with the ringlets of gold.

O'er a life and a soul that is tarnished
And marred by the impress of sin;—
O'er features once fair, now betraying
The depths of the ruin within.

Forgive Lord, my bitter repining
When first I passed under the rod;
'Twas the hand of a Father that chastened,
And pity my neighbor, O God!

THE SINKING OF THE MERRIMAC.

Stealing along through the darksome hours
That lie between the night and the day,
The Merrimac and her gallant crew
Entered the mouth of the Cuban bay.
Onward they sped, though the hissing shells
Burst around them on left and right,
While the blazing guns of Fort Morro
Shed over the scene their ghastly light.

Fierce and fast the shot and shell
Rent the air and lighted the wave,
But powerless was their wrathful fire
When showered on the Yankees brave.
One mighty crash and the noble ship
Quivered and sank to rise no more;
But Cevera's fleet was safely hemmed,
To await the fire from the Cuban shore.

Mourn not the fate of the gallant ship
Asleep in the depths of the southern sea,—

A sacrifice on our nation's shrine,
In the struggle for Cuban liberty.
As long as the stars and stripes shall wave,
As long as we cherish the red, white and blue,
American hearts will honor and bless
The names of those heroes,—the Merrimac's crew.

AUTUMN.

Let poets chant of balmy spring
And all the gladness she may bring,—
Green fields and bursting flowers!
'Tis sweet to hear the hum of bees
Among the blossom-scented trees,
In May-time's sunny hours;

And yet I love the autumn best;
There is a quiet sense of rest
Pervades each passing breeze.
The purple hill tops far away,
Like sentinels at close of day,
Stand guard o'er slumbering leas.

The busy summer, with its weight
Of cares and trials, small and great,
Lies buried in the past;
The deeds that you and I have done
From day to day,—from sun to sun,
Will yield us fruit at last.

The changing hue of leaf and flower,
That marks the season's dying hour,
  Is fraught with mem'ries sweet;
The old log school house on the hill
Is brought to mind with joyous thrill
  Of childhood's pleasures fleet.

I see once more a country road,
Where goldenrods in beauty glowed
  Among the sumachs, red;
And groups of merry children, too,
Who watched the wild birds flitting through
  The branches overhead.

And there was one—my childhood's friend,
Who oft with me glad hours did spend
  Down by the streamlet's side.
We built play-houses by the rill
Which bubbled 'neath the wooded hill
  Beside the forest wide.

We decked our house with mosses, green,
And lichens from the log between
  The school house and the brook;
Gay autumn leaves we gathered 'round,
From where they'd fallen on the ground,
  To grace our woodland nook.

The years passed on and womanhood
Brought each our store of ill and good,
  As other lives betide.
I know not yet how great my share
Of joy or sorrow, toil or care,—
  How rough life's sea, or wide.

But this I know; my childhood's friend
Is safe where pleasures never end,—
Safe on the other side.
For her there'll be no grief or ill
No piercing blast,—no wintry chill,—
'Twas autumn when she died.

"PAPA, WAS 'OO COMIN' HOME?"

When the evening shades are falling
And the night is drawing near,
Jessie leaves her play and dollies—
Goes to watch for papa, dear.
Down the path she goes to meet him,
At the open gate she stands,
Calling to him in the twilight,
Beck'ning with her little hands.

Now the dews of night are falling
And the air is growing chill;
Yet that little voice is calling,
Calling for her papa still.
Down the busy street she gazes,
Heeding not the darkening gloom,
As the baby voice she raises—
"Papa, was 'oo comin' home?"

Now she sees her loved one coming;
Joy her little heart doth fill;
"Mamma, don't 'oo see him comin'
Comin' down there by the mill?"

"Yes, my darling, papa's coming,"
Sounds the voice she loves so well.
As he clasped her to his bosom,
Ere the darkening shadows fell.

Ah! now when he comes at twilight,
And the day of work is o'er,
No one meets him at the gateway—
Jessie's standing there no more;
For the little feet have wandered
Through the golden gates above—
She is happy there with Jesus,
In that home of joy and love.

But she'll not forget the loved ones
That she cherished here below;
She is watching for our coming,
Who will be the first to go?
Now she stands at Heaven's gateway,
Ne'er through time's rough paths to roam;
Still she's calling to her loved one,
"Papa, was 'oo comin' home?"

UNSEEN VISITORS.

Oft in the twilight there come to me,
Faces and forms of the loved and the lost;
Till I fancy my earth-holden vision can see
Thro' the mists that o'ershadow the river they've crossed.

The dearly loved accents of voices long hushed,
So tenderly, lovingly fall on my ear,

I forget how Time's river relentless has rushed,
And divided them from me by many a year.

The patter of little feet sounds through the rooms
That long ago echoed their joyous tread,
And dimpled arms lovingly circle my neck,
As I clasp to my bosom a golden brown head.

And the faces of dear ones I loved when a child,
Come back with glad mem'ries of days gone by,
As we sit in the twilight and talk of the past,
Those visiting spirits of loved ones and I.

Do you fancy those memories sadden my heart?
Do you think for one moment I'd happier be,
If I knew that the spirits of those I hold dear
Would never more lovingly linger 'round me?

Oh! dear ones departed, who knows but you walk
Beside us, unseen, through the hours of the day,
Or wait by our pillow with vigilant care,
To drive aught that threatens us danger, away?

HER JEWELS.

A princess was showing her jewels one day
To a Roman mother, in a boasting way.
There were diamonds and rubies and emeralds, gay,
And pearls from beneath the white ocean spray.
There were amethysts, opals and sapphires, so blue.
They seemed to be blended with heaven's own hue.

Topaz and beryl the bright array swelled,—
The wealth of a kingdom her jewel-case held.

But no envious thought filled the proud matron's breast
As she answered the woman with earth's riches blest:
"These, these are my jewels," the mother replied,
As she smiled on the little ones grouped by her side.
"When life here is ended, my jewels, so fair,
Shall shine in the King's diadem over there.
You cannot take yours, their splendor will die,
Then who is the richer, my friend, you or I."

Dear mother, with little ones clinging to thee,
Remember how precious those jewels must be,
Since God, for their sake, sent his son here to die;
He'll gather the gems for his crown bye and bye.
Be patient and loving and strive while you may
To point them to Jesus, their Savior, each day,
So when life is ended, in Heaven's bright clime
Your jewels shall beam with a radiance sublime.

A RAINY DAY.

Oh, this dreary, dreary day!
Heavy hang the clouds so gray,
Shutting sunshine all away
As we list to the refrain
Played upon the window pane,
By the never-ceasing rain,
As it chants in monotone,
Like some half-demented crone

Sitting by her cold hearthstone,
Grieving over days gone by.
Sad, yet scarcely knowing why;
While we hear the east wind sigh
Through the pine trees' dripping boughs,
Through the barn's hay-scented mows,
And we see the patient cows
Frosty, Daisy and old Red,
Standing in the narrow shed,
Waiting to be milked and fed.
Now the wind comes rushing by
With a weird unearthly cry,
Changing to a mournful sigh,
As it sweeps among the trees,
Twirling gusts of withered leaves
Underneath the dripping eaves.
Wonder where the birds can be!
Not a warbler can we see,
Save the blue jay in the tree
As he flits from bough to bough—
Thinks he's found a shelter now
Yet the driving rain somehow
Finds its way into his bower
Scattering down a crystal shower,
Bids him seek some safer tower.
Pleasant days go flitting by
Like a meteor in the sky,
And I sometimes wonder why
Rainy days should pass so slow
As if they were loath to go.
Can it be they do not know
That we bear them no affection
And would raise no great objection,

(Could we make our own selection)
If they never came at all?
And the rain would only fall
When the night with sable pall
"Wraps the earth in silence deep"
And we mortals, fast asleep,
Heed not though the sky should weep
Through the long hours of the night
So the morning skies be bright
And the clouds dissolved in light.

OLD FRIENDS.

Day by day we form new friendships,
Forge new links in mem'ry's chain,
Add new faces to the pictures
Stamped upon our heart and brain;
Faces that, when years have vanished,
And our lives drift far apart,
Oft will linger in our memory,
Seeming of ourselves a part.

Some we've known in days of pleasure,
Some when sorrow laid her hand
On our heads bowed low with anguish,
Shipwrecked on Life's rock-bound strand.
Others will come floating to us,
That we once held near and dear,
But the love 'twixt us grew colder,
Day by day and year by year,

Till we scarce knew when the limit
Of our friendship's ties was passed,
But the old time mem'ries linger
'Round my heart while life shall last.
Though we fondly prize the friendships
That spring up about our way,
Yet I think we hold the dearer
Those we've loved in childhood's day.

And the old familiar voices,
With their praise or censure, mild,
Of the true friends and the tried ones,
That we cherished when a child.
Yes, of all the well-loved faces
On my memory impressed,
Those who've been my friends the longest
Are the ones I love the best.

THE DYING YEAR.

Farewell, Old Year!
The dreams we dreamed when thou wert young,
The hopes we built the songs we sung—
We bury with thee here.

Farewell, Old Year!
The hours of pleasure thou hast brought,
The lessons thou hast kindly taught,
We hold in memory dear.

Farewell, Old Year!
We would in charity forget
All thou hast brought us to regret—
Rememb'ring what was dear.

Farewell, Old Year!
May he who comes to take thy place—
With youthful form and smiling face—
Bring us as much of cheer!

WILD ROSES.

Coming when spring's fairer flowers
All have withered, all have fled,
Climbing o'er the old rail fences
With their blossoms white and red;
See the sweet wild roses blooming
In their dainty, modest grace,
Changing dusty lane and roadside
To a flowery garden place.

All along the country wayside,
Through the briers may be seen
Clusters of their cheery faces,
Blushing mid the foliage green.
And full many a weary traveler
Pauses for a moment there,
As he plucks the beauteous blossoms,
Rich and poor alike may share.

In a garden of rare roses,
Tended by a careful hand,

'Mid the bright and radiant flowers,
Natives of a foreign land,
There the sweet wild rose would languish,
Pining for some woodland nook,
Where the rustic hedge divided
Dusty road and flowing brook.

Thus we find it in life's garden,
And the flower we love the best,
Is not always richer, brighter,
And more radiant than the rest.
Like the violet and wild rose
Unassuming lives there be,
Not so great and grand, but just the
Kind of friends for you and me.

ONLY A BABY'S COFFIN.

Only a baby's coffin,
Only a casket small;
Yet who can measure a mother's woe,
As the earth-clods on it fall?

Only a tiny blossom
Plucked by Death's ruthless hand,
Only a precious bud gathered,
To unfold in the heavenly land.

The little feet that were destined
Never to walk below,
Shall tread the streets of that city
Where cometh no sorrow or woe.

And the waxen hands that are folded
Over the pulseless breast,
Shall beckon the parents and loved ones
To the land of eternal rest.

Then who shall say that the baby
Lived his life in vain—
The life so early ended,
So fraught with earthly pain?

Their child so pure and sinless
Shall be one link in the chain
That binds the parents to Heaven—
They'll meet him there again.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

Across the fields—the snow-clad fields—
The Christmas bells were pealing;
And listening mortals, young or old,
With loving heart or heart grown cold,
Grew warm with kindly feeling.

A stately mansion on the hill
With Christmas cheer was beaming,
And from its windows, wide and low,
A traveler caught the cheerful glow
Of lighted tapers gleaming.

A lonely child—a wanderer—
Whom night had overtaken,

Crept to the doorway, open wide,
And noting all the cheer inside
Which Christmas joys awaken,

Bespoke, in low, entreating tones,
A shelter till the morning.
"And who is this that would intrude,
This beggar, insolent and rude?"
They asked this question, scorning.

"How dare you in your tattered garb
Come here to mar our pleasure?
Your garments, thin, and pallid face
Would contrast sadly with this place
Where all is wealth and leisure."

And thus they turned him from their door,
A homeless, friendless, stranger;
As though no thought had come to them
Of that lowly Child in Bethlehem—
His couch the oxen's manger.

Almost within the shadow of
That mansion on the hill,
A tiny cottage, small and low,
Lay 'neath the canopy of snow
That clung to thatch and sill.

A cheerful fire upon the hearth
Its radiant gleam was throwing
On children's faces, fair and bright,
Grouped 'round the blazing fagots' light,
With health and pleasure glowing.

Upon the table, plain, though neat,
Was laid their frugal supper,
No costly viands graced the board,
No dainties from a larder stored
With aught but bread and butter.

And as they clustered round the fire,
With simple word and accent,
The mother read the story old—
The Christmas story angels told,
And taught them what the day meant.

With thankful hearts they gathered round
Their humble Christmas store,
When little Gretchen first espied
A stranger, weary and sad-eyed,
Outside the cottage door.

"Go, Hans, and bring him in," she cried;
"Please, mother, say he may,
And I will set another chair;
With him our supper we will share
For the sake of Christmas day."

They seated him beside their board,
The wanderer, lone and exiled,
Then they saw a halo round his head
The cloth with viands, rich, was spread—
The stranger was the Christ-Child.

AIR CASTLES.

Oh, the castles we builded, you and I,
In the halcyon days of the long gone by;
When each setting sun marked a day of glee
In a world as happy as happy could be!

Yes, we builded our castles day by day,
That crumbled to dust in the twilight gray.
But the glad hours sped on a lighter wing,
As we dreamed of joys the future would bring.

These visions of childhood, these dreams of our youth,
How seldom, alas, do the years prove their truth!
But what would life be if each step of the way
Was never illumined by hope's cheerful ray?

The heart would grow faint ere the years were half told
That lie between us and the City of Gold.
Perchance, by the wayside we'd sink in despair,
Could we see all the burdens we're destined to bear.

We are building still, on a larger plan,
Every woman and every man,
Though our castles may fade and vanish away,
Like spectral shadows, at closing of day;

Yet ever we're hoping to-morrow will bring
The blessings we long for, while fondly we cling
To the hopes that are withered and blighted each day
And the idols we sometime shall find are but clay.

BUDS AND HOPES.

Like the buds swell in springtime
Are the hopes of life's young hours,
When the future lies before us,
Like a fairy-land of flowers.
Though the clouds may come between us
And the sunshine now and then,
Still we're hoping by the morrow,
Skies will be serene again.

Yet not all the buds that promise
Harvest rich of fruit and flowers,
Yield the fullness spring betokened,
In the summer's reaping hours.
Some will fade and droop and wither
As they open one by one;
Others ne'er reveal their blighting
Till the harvest is begun.

Thus, not all the hopes we cherish
In the springtime of our life,
In the coming days will yield us
Harvest plentiful and rife.
Some will wither, some will perish,
Few, perchance, we'll see fulfilled,
Ere the autumn leaves have fallen
And the wheels of life are stilled.

THE UNFINISHED TASK.

I sat alone in the twilight
One evening long ago,
And the anthracite in the open grate
Sent out a cheerful glow;
But my heart was not in keeping
With the shadows' mirthful play,
For in the churchyard, sleeping,
They had left my child that day.

My eyes had grown heavy with weeping
At the thought of the path I must tread;
I prized not those still in my keeping,
But mourned for the child that was dead.
I dreaded the long, lonely hours
Which life had in store for me,
I heeded not earth's fairest flowers—
The thorns were all I could see.

Life's burden seemed so heavy,
I fain would lay it down;
I longed to exchange earth's crosses
For Heaven's starry crown.
My feet were so impatient
To walk the golden street,
It seemed I scare could wait God's time
My little one to meet.

And as thus I sat in the twilight,
I sent up a prayer to Heaven
To let me go home to my darling—
The answer was speedily given,

For I felt a light touch on my shoulder,
And, raising my tear-laden eyes,
I beheld the loveliest vision
E'er seen 'neath the Heavenly skies.

A form, clad in white, stood beside me—
A beautiful angel so fair
That I fancied the glory of Heaven
Shone through the bright waves of her hair.
"Poor earth-child," she said in soft accents,
"Do you grieve for the loved and the lost?
I'll pilot you o'er the dark river,
The river your loved one has crossed."

Then out of the cottage she leads me,
Out into the starry night;
A cloud is wafting us upward,
And earth scenes now fade from our sight.
We enter the beautiful City,
The "City not made with hands,"
And close by the Heavenly portals
My darling, my loved one stands.

She joyfully hastened to greet me—
"Oh, mamma, I'm glad you have come.
Have papa and brothers and baby
All come to this beautiful home?
Are my brothers and sisters all with you,
My playmates so good and so kind?
I couldn't be happy in Heaven
If any should be left behind."

"No, darling," I answered her sadly,
"I forgot that they needed my care,

From the depths of my selfish sorrow,
For death was my only prayer."
Then I saw I had left all unfinished
The task which the Master had given,
There were lonely ones I should have cherished—
Little ones guided to Heaven.

I bowed my head low in contrition,
As I thought of that unfinished task,
If I could but go back and bring them,
'Twould be all that my sad heart could ask.
As thus I lamented my weakness
In shirking the work that was mine,
The pitying voice of my Savior
Spoke in comforting accents divine.

"Go back, now, my child, to your labor;
Bear gladly the cross while you may,
And your path shall grow brighter and brighter
As you work for the Master each day."
I awoke with a start, I'd been dreaming,
The fire in the grate had burned low;
But the vision a lesson had taught me,
And its import I think I can show;

I must wait until God's own time cometh
And finish my work ere I go
To join the dear friends gone before me,
In the land where no death we shall know.

MARGUERITE.

Little maiden with golden hair,
Dark brown eyes and brow so fair,
Dainty and sweet,
Marguerite,
Fairest of all the fair.

Charming all with thy womanly ways,
Smiling through dark or sunshiny days,
Loving and sweet,
Marguerite,
Winning our love and praise.

Innocent eyes with questioning look—
Reading our hearts as we'd read a book,
Trusting and sweet,
Marguerite,
Pure as the rippling brook.

But years will come and years will go,
As the river of time with ceaseless flow,
At thy feet,
Marguerite,
Sorrows and joys will throw.

May the varied scenes of future years,
Bring thee more of smiles than tears;
Joys are fleet,
Marguerite,
Sorrow soon appears.

Could I but make one wish for thee,
I'd wish that life might ever be
Just as sweet,
Marguerite,
As now it is to thee.

THE POOR MAN'S BURDEN.

Ye sing "The White Man's Burden,"
The Black Man and the Brown;
But all unnoted is the weight
That bears the poor man down.
For him no path of glory
Marks out his daily life;
His is the prosy struggle
Of a bread-and-butter strife.

For him no gems or laurels,
No praise of fellow-man—
Although he wins the bravest fight
A mortal ever can.
'Tis only counted "duty"
To labor day by day,
To keep the ones he loves from want,
And drive the wolf away.

No heights of wordly honor
Reward his patient toil;
His fairest hopes of happiness,
Misfortune oft doth spoil.
E'en while he strives to build again
His fallen castles fair,
Once more they crumble into dust,
Despite his patient care.

And day by day as sinks the sun
Low in the glowing west—
Fade from his sight his brightest hopes,
The fairest and the best.

Think ye it takes no courage,
To battle with the tide
Of hardships and misfortunes
That surges on either side?

The pathos of the common-place
Unvaried is his own;
The struggle tells on heart and brain
As water wears the stone,
Till soon or late death's summons comes,
And he is called from hence
And fills a lowly, unmarked grave—
The poor man's recompense.

IN MEMORY OF FRANCES WILLARD.

Sweet be thy rest beyond the shining portals,
The rest for which thy spirit often sighed!
We would not call thee back to earthly sorrow—
To ford once more Death's river cold and wide.

And though that voice, whose gently thrilling accents
Spoke sympathy to many a burdened heart,
No more will gladden us, thy loyal subjects,
Or courage to our longing hearts impart.

Thy labors shall go on and on forever;
The work so grand thy willing hands begun
Shall gather strength, until the pure white banner
Of temperance waves from east to setting sun.

A life so pure, so full of willing service,
Can ne'er be told by numbered months and years;

But lives to bless us with the works that follow,
Till glad we reap the harvest sown in tears.

Throughout our land, from ocean unto ocean,
Thy name is linked with all that's holiest, best;
While hearts awakened in the Orient,
With one accord arise and call thee blest.

The British Isles, the sunny slopes of Burmah—
Australia with her wealth of field and mine,
Are bound with us in snowy bands of ribbon
Entwined by those untiring hands of thine.

In coming years the name of Frances Willard
Will prove a strong incentive to the right—
The cause she loved must never know dishonor—
She leads us still, though passed from mortal sight.

The best loved woman of the nation,
She trod the walks of life an uncrowned queen;
Uncrowned? Nay, for earth's brightest jewels
Beside her brow would lose their glittering sheen;

For if each soul her pure life won from darkness,
Shines as a jewel in her diadem,
Then earthly eyes have ne'er beheld such brightness,
Since wise men saw the star of Bethlehem.

Though gone from us, beloved, promoted leader,
There's comfort in the path thy feet have trod;
May we like thee, exclaim while passing over,
"How beautiful it is to be with God!"

FALTERING.

God pity the man with a soul so small
That he'd sell it for dollars and cents,
And peril the cause he knows to be right,
For a financial recompense!

God pity the man, who, strong himself,
Lays a snare at his neighbor's door,
And calmly watches a brother's bark
Borne down on a rock-bound shore!

God pity the man who will hesitate
To strike with his might and main,
At the licensed evil that stands in our midst—
That has left on our land its stain!

God pity the man who has not the strength—
The resolute courage and will
To raise his voice in defense of his land
Against the worm of the still!

God pity the man who may live to see
An own son handsome and brave—
A victim fall to the treacherous cup,
And fill an inebriate's grave!

ACROSTIC.

Tyrant that robs the home of its light,
Hovering o'er us with withering blight—
Even life's noonday is turned into night;

When across our pathway thy shadow doth fall,
It darkens our skies like a funeral pall.
No mind can fathom the sorrow and woe
Embalmed in thy sparkling and treacherous flow;

Canceling all of Heaven below,
Until we find the home once so fair,
Plunged into darkness and deepest despair.

WASHINGTON.

Oh, where is the son of American soil
Who feels not his pulses stirred
With a patriot's love and a freeman's pride,
When the name of Washington is heard?

A name that shall dwell in the hearts of men,
Undimmed by the flow of years;
A name that inspires the veteran's zeal
And rings on the schoolboy's cheers.

The chieftain who led his warriors on
'Mid the battle's deafening roar,
Or knelt in the snow of Valley Forge,
The help of God to implore.

Though placed at the head of his countrymen,
Crowned with the trust they had given,
The hero's heart was proud to admit
The supremacy of Heaven.

Though the name of Washington be revered
From the peasant's hut to the throne,
No other nation can boast as we—
We claim him—America's own.

And long as Columbia's realm shall stand,
The hearts of her grateful sons
Shall honor the name of the hero that sleeps
Where Potomac's river runs.

NOVEMBER.

All around us brown leaves lying,
North winds through the forest sighing,
Whisper softly, "Autumn's dying,
Winter's on his way."
O'er the brown deserted meadows
Creep the chill November shadows
And the drooping flowers remind us,
We must fade as well as they.

Brooks that in the spring went flashing
Through the woodland, leaping—dashing,
O'er the mossy rocks, and splashing
Gayly down their pebbly bed—
Have forgotten all their gladness,
All their gleeful, mirthful madness,
And are silent now for sadness,
Grieving for the flowers dead.

Gray clouds o'er the landscape glimmer
And the sun shines fainter, dimmer,

As his rays fast paling shimmer
On the bosom of the stream;
And the winds that sigh around us,
Mem'ries waft of joys that crowned us,
And of loving links that bound us,
Vanished like a pleasant dream.

Autumn joys are shorter, fleeter,
Autumn mem'ries sadder, sweeter,
As in softer, tender meter
Nature chants a requiem
O'er the flowers that bloomed and perished,
O'er the birds the summer nourished,
O'er the hopes we mortals cherished,
But to pass away with them.

As we greet each chill November,
Heralding the bleak December,
Something seems to say "Remember,
Life is drawing to its close."
Cheeks that bloom and eyes that brighten,
Soon must fade and ringlets whiten,
And old age our pleasures lighten,
'Mid December's blighting snows."

HEROES.

We call him brave who stands unmoved
Amid the battle's din and roar,
Unflinching though the deadly hail
Of shot and shell around him pour.

'Tis courage true that nerves a man
The vital flame of life to yield,
If needed for his country's aid,
Upon a gory battlefield.

But are there not in humbler spheres
Ten thousand souls as brave as they,
Who never carry sword or gun,
But win a victory every day?

The soul that stands unscathed amid
The threatening flames of slander's tongue,
And only seeks for duty's path,
The varied scenes of life among.

As justly earns the laurel wreath—
As justly earns a conqueror's crown,
As he who wins upon the field
Of battle, glory and renown.

Life's battle does not come to us
One mighty, vast "stupendous whole,"
But petty trials day by day,
That wear on heart and brain and soul.

The hasty word, the cutting tone
Too trivial, almost, to heed—
Repeated daily tries the soul
Far more than many a graver deed.

Not every hero God has made,
Will ever win this world's renown;
But many a soul in humble ranks,
Shall one day wear a conqueror's crown.

DRIFTING.

I wandered by the streamlet
  And watched a brown leaf float
Adown the rippling current—
  A tiny fairy boat.
It floated by so swiftly,
  Upon the silvery tide,
As it hastened to the ocean
  Or sought a place to hide.

And I thought, "Ah, little leaflet,
  Your travels just begun,
Perhaps will reach the ocean
  Before your journey's done."
And e'en the mighty ocean
  With its barren, trackless waste,
May bear still further onward
  The leaf the breezes chased.

And some day in the future,
  You may be washed ashore
On some far southern island,
  Amid the wild waves roar;
Or in the sunny tropics
  Perhaps you'll find a home,
Where the golden sands lie sparkling
  Beside the ocean's foam.

And very like thy floating
  Is the drifting of our lives;
And oft to some port unsignaled,
  The tempest our vessel drives.

May we, like thee, rest calmly,
Wherever our lot may fall,
Content to know God reigneth—
He reigneth over all.

MY NEIGHBOR.

My neighbor has plenty of leisure,
My neighbor just over the way;
She has time for reading and painting—
She has time to sing and to play.

Her sitting room never is littered
With picture books, papers and toys;
Her carpets are bright and unsullied
By muddy footprints of the boys.

Her door screens are never left open,
And I'm sure your search would be vain
If you carefully sought every window
For wee finger marks on the pane.

When callers come in, and the parlor
Is opened, you never will find
A drum and a kite on the sofa,
And a broom-stick the doorway behind.

Her rooms are in exquisite order,
Each chair stands just where it should be;
But let me just whisper a secret—
A secret between you and me.

I doubt if she's ever so happy
In her beautiful, orderly place
As I, with the little ones 'round me
And baby lips warm on my face.

Do you fancy I envy my neighbor?
"She's richer than I," do you say?
You'll smile when I tell you I pity
My neighbor just over the way.

THE FROZEN HEART.

In recent years you often ask
Why I so cold and changed appear;
You chide me that I cherish not
Caresses which I once held dear.

You say you'd give the world to know
I loved you as in days of yore—
To see the tender love-light beam
In eyes that meet your own, once more.

You wonder what has wrought the change;
You call me fickle, heartless, cold.
You think no depths of tenderness
My shallow heart could ever hold.

But ah, the anguish I have felt—
The sleepless nights and saddened days,
Ere love could die its lingering death—
Slain by harsh words and chilling ways.

When first you won my trusting heart,
I fancied life would all be sweet;
The wondrous wealth of woman's love
I laid with gladness at your feet.

I lived but for your word or smile,
The day however dark or sad,
Grew brighter when your eyes met mine;
Your voice the heavy heart made glad.

I fancied love would light our way,
Dispelling every cloud of gloom
That cast a shadow o'er the path
Between the altar and the tomb.

But as the months and years passed on,
You seemed to prize my love the less;
While sadly I began to miss
The loving word and fond caress.

And yet I could not, would not think
Your love for me thus soon could fade.
I told myself 'twas business cares
That such a change in you had made.

Thus striving to deceive myself
I cherished every word and smile;
While in my heart a warning voice
Kept whispering to me all the while:

"As children tire of every toy
That is no longer bright or new,
The novelty of newness gone
He has grown weary, too, of you!"

And like the sunbeams shining through
The raindrop, casting in the sky
A bow of light which promise gives
Of fairer weather bye and bye—

The fond caress that seldom came
And loving word now rarely spoken,
Shone through the clouds of cold neglect,
And served but as a rainbow token.

As sped the years, you drifted far,
And farther from me day by day;
And she who loved you more than life
Found that her idol was of clay.

In silence then the wounded heart
Strove to conceal its bitterness;
And as the lengthened years crept on,
I prayed that I might love thee less.

An answered prayer! for now the heart
That once was warm with love to thee,
Lies cold and dead within my breast—
May Heaven pity you and me!

In vain you clasp my hand in yours,
And speak of by-gone, happier days;
In vain you look into my eyes,
And murmur tender words of praise.

Each cruel word and studied slight
That wrung my heart in years gone by—
Confront me when I'd fain forget,
And spread a gulf 'twixt you and I.

A tender word, a look from you
Would once sweet sunshine 'round me shed;
The frozen heart now heeds them not—
They have no power to wake the dead!

THE WRECK OF THE MAINE.

'Twas night, and o'er the tropic sea
The twinkling stars their vigil kept;
While all unconscious of their fate,
Wrapped in sweet dreams the sailors slept.
They dreamed of absent home and friends,
Of little ones now far away;
Of wives and sweethearts, mothers, too,
Who knelt each night for them to pray.

In fancy once again they met
Around the hearthstone of the home,
Or trod once more the merry haunts
Where childhood's footsteps loved to roam.
Once more perchance the sailor boy
In fancy held with tender clasp
The fair white hand on which he placed
A circlet with his farewell grasp.

Once more in dreams the father heard
The joyous prattle of his child;
While from her chair beside his own,
The mother looked on them and smiled.
But hark! What means that dreadful shock
That hurls the noble ship in air?

That awful crash, that burst of flame,
  That lit the waves with lurid glare?

With shivered mast and severed hull,
  The good ship sank beneath the wave;
While coffined in her shattered hold,
  Two hundred seamen found a grave.
But Spain has paid, yes dearly paid,
  For every prize her treachery won;
And heavier yet her loss may be
  Before her lesson may be done.

America can ne'er forget
  The Maine and those who sailed with her;
Who shared her fortunes and her fate
  And found with her a sepulcher.
Sleep on, proud ship; thou art avenged;
  Thy seamen honored in their lot.
The tottering throne of Spain shall fall
  Ere thou or they shall be forgot!

APPLE BLOSSOMS.

Apple blossoms, bright and fair,
Shed thy fragrance on the air,
Gladdening all this quiet place
With thy dainty blushing face.
How thy blossoms, pink and white,
Bring fond memories back to sight!
Bring back childhood's happy hours,
When I played among the flowers.

Ah, a merry group were we,
Gathered 'neath the blooming tree,
As we played at "King and Queen,"
On the orchard grass so green;
Crowned our sovereign with a wreath
Laden with thy fragrant breath—
Laughed to see the blossoms fall
At the south wind's rustling call.

Little thought of care had we
As we romped in childish glee:
Birds and blossoms overhead—
Springtime verdure 'neath our tread;
Sunbeams, through the leafy boughs,
Lit the garlands on our brows
And the turtle-dove's sweet call
Echoed from the forest, tall.

Ah, me! How the years go by!
How the hours and moments fly!
Childhood's joys have passed away;
Golden locks are tinged with gray.
Joys and sorrows come to all,
As the blossoms bud and fall;
Cherished hopes may bud and bloom
But to fade and wither soon.

Now, that merry group have fled;
"Some are married, some are dead;"
Yet I love the blossoms, bright,
That bring their mem'ry back to sight,
Others may the praises tell
Of "the lily in the dell,"

Of the rose's matchless hue—
Lilac and chrysanthem, too,
But there's no flower so dear to me
As those that deck the orchard tree.

SOMEBODY'S BABY.

Somebody's baby was buried to-day.
As the tiny casket passed this way,
I felt the tears in my own eyes start,
At the thought of the mother's aching heart.

Somebody's home is robbed of the joy
That clung 'round the baby girl or boy,
Somebody's heart is breaking to-night,
While an empty cradle and pillow, white,

Seem to wait, but wait in vain,
For a little form that never again
Will lightly press their downy folds
And dream of the treasures dreamland holds.

Somebody's life will never more be
As full of brightness, of joy or glee,
For into her pleasures will steal a sound
Like winds sweeping o'er a churchyard mound.

Whose darling it was, I never may know,
Yet I've measured the depths of that mother's woe
For loving hands, one sad day, bore
A little coffin away from my door.

A SUMMER NIGHT.

Softly the moonlight—sweetly the moonlight
Shimmering rests on valley and hill;
Shadows are falling—night-birds are calling,
Faint comes the chant of the murmuring rill.

Gently the dew-drops, the freshening dew-drops,
Fall on the thirsty and withering flowers;
Opening the roses which morning discloses,
Fresh from their nap in the cool, fragrant bowers.

Whispering zephyrs, flower-laden zephyrs
Waft us the breath of the lily and rose;
Fire-flies are flitting where grasses are knitting—
Sweet is the hush of nature's repose.

Beautifully rustling, musically rustling,
The sycamore leaves gleam silvery white,
Shadows are resting where robins are nesting
With head under wing till dawning of light.

The ill-natured katy-did, quarrelsome katy-did
Hid in the lilac disputes with his mate,
While the sweet-throated whip-poor-will, plaintive-voiced whip-poor-will
Sings in the walnut tree down by the gate.

Oh, music of nightfall! Oh, beauty of nightfall!
How sweet to tired hearts is thy season of rest!
When each care and each sorrow we leave to the morrow
And think only thoughts that are dearest and best.

FREDDIE'S WORK.

Just outside my window, one mid-summer day,
A group of bright children were busy at play,
Building air-castles as happy youth can,
Each told what he'd be when he was a man.

"Oh, I'll be a preacher like papa!" said Guy;
To point all the people to Jesus, I'll try.
I'l tell them all to be patient and true
So they'll go to Heaven; I want to, don't you?"

"And I'll be a doctor," said Johnny Caldwell,
"And make all sick folks and lame ones get well."
"Oh, I'll be an author!" said another one,
"And write good books, as papa has done."

"And I'll be a merchant," said little Eugene;
"I never will cheat or do anything mean.
My goods shall be just what I tell folks they are
Whether made in our town or brought from afar."

And so they talked on in their innocent glee;
Each child wished to be like his father, you see.
Whether lawyer or printer, bookkeeper, or clerk,
The child wished to follow his parent's life work.

But all had not spoken; my favorite one
Was little Fred Brown, the saloonkeeper's son.
With his laughing blue eyes and sunshiny curls
And dimple cheeks, as fair as a girl's.

"Well, Freddy," I said; "how is it with you?
When you are a man what work will you do?

A blush stole over the dimpled cheek,
And a tear-drop fell, ere the child could speak.

"There is one thing I'm certain I never will do!"
With a flash of fire in the eye so blue;
"I never will sell any brandy or wine;
No drunkard shall fall by this hand of mine.

"No man shall e'er say that I gave him the rum
That poisoned his soul and beggared his home;
You ask me the question, I know what I'll do,
I'll fight alcohol and get other folks to."

THE DEACON'S DREAM.

Jonathan Brown of Muggletown,
Was a citizen of no small renown.
In the church he was ever a shining light,
A model of virtue—a mortal upright—
A saintlier man could never be found
Though you searched the country for miles around.

His name headed each subscription list,
The appeals of the needy he couldn't resist;
On Sunday, at church he was sure to be found,
And dropped in his mite when the basket came 'round.
He listens intent while the sermon begins
And the minister speaks of besetting sins.

He nods his head in a pious way
And thinks "I'm glad Smith's here to-day;
For surely 'twas him the preacher meant

When he talked of days and years misspent,
For everyone knows (thinks Deacon Brown)
That Smith is the laziest man in town.

"And when he spoke of the love of gold,
Surely no one need ever be told
He was thinking of Thompson (that sinful man),
Who hoards up every dollar he can.
No wonder he bowed his head for shame,
The parson might as well have called him by name.

"And when he was speaking of pomp and pride,
I couldn't help looking at Sophie Woodside.
I hope she'll forsake her sinful ways
And profit by what the minister says,"
There dawned on his mind no conception dim
That aught of the sermon was fitted to him.

But this worthy man, so the neighbors say,
Fell asleep in his chair one day;
He dreamed he was freed from his earthly cares,
Already had climbed the celestial stairs,
And for the coming of Peter did wait—
Just outside of the Heavenly gate.

But good St. Peter jingled his keys,
And said, "Let's have your name, if you please."
"My name is Deacon Jonathan Brown."
St. Peter looked over his books with a frown,
And said, "You're the man who swore like a sinner
Because you had to wait ten minutes for dinner.

"Just take that path on your left, if you please,
That is the one that leads to Hades."
The deacon woke from his dream in a fright,

The sun had gone down, it was nearly night.
But the lesson must surely have wrought him some good,
For since then, it seems, he's understood
That he has faults as well as others,
And some that show plainer, perhaps, than his brothers'.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas is here; yes, Christmas is here!
The happiest, merriest day of the year,
When the old and the young—
The sad and the gay,
Forget all their woes in the joy of the day.

Christmas is here; yes, Christmas is here!
With its happy home-comings from far and from near,
When matronly women
And grave business men,
'Round the hearth of the homestead are children again.

Christmas is here; yes, Christmas is here,
Though the clouds may hang low and the landscape be drear;
We hold but the dearer
The brightness within,
When outside no glimmer of sunshine is seen.

What though all the wild flowers are hidden away
In the depths of the snow-covered forest to-day;
The roses that bloom
In the cheeks of the maid
Who thoughtlessly under the mistletoe strayed—

Are fairer by far in her fond lover's eyes,
Than any that blossom 'neath midsummer skies,
And the daisies that slumber
In earth's bosom now,
But rival in whiteness the snow of her brow.

Christmas is here; yes, Christmas is here!
Away with all thoughts that are gloomy or drear!
We drop for one day
The cares of the year,
And heartily join in the glad Christmas cheer.

WHOSE FAULT?

The night winds swept over the city,
The pitiless rain and the sleet
Sent hurrying home each traveler
Who chanced to be out on the street;
And up in the curtainless window
Of a tenement dark and high,
A wan little face, for an instant,
Looked out as the wind whistled by.

"I wish I could see Katie coming;
I wonder what keeps her so late.
She said she would be home by seven,
And now I am sure 'tis past eight.
She said if she sold any matches,
She'd bring me some crackers or bread,
And, maybe, a big, juicy orange,
Yes, that is just what Katie said.

"So long it has been since I had one—
Not since mamma died, I am sure.
Dear sister's not able to buy them;
I guess they're not made for the poor."
Then up the dark steps from the alley
Crept Katie with faltering feet;
Her thin garments, clinging around her,
Were drenched with the rain and the sleet.

She entered the darkened room softly,
But the ear of the child caught the tread
Of the sister she watched for so fondly—
Her one friend since mother was dead.
"Dear Katie," she asked in faint accents,
As her sister knelt down by her bed,
"Have you brought me an orange or cracker,
Or even a cold piece of bread?"

"Oh, Eva, poor Eva, my darling!
No matches I've sold all the day;
And though we are starving—yes, starving—
Bread cannot be bought without pay.
I've trudged o'er the city since morning
In hopes I could earn or could beg
Some pennies to buy my sick sister
A nice slice of toast or an egg.

"But no one would buy any matches,
And none had a penny to spare;
Not even the crumbs from the table
Would they with an orphan child share.
I told them of you, little Eva,
My sick baby sister alone,

But they turned a deaf ear to my pleading
And bade the poor beggar begone."

"Well, never mind, sister," said Eva,
"I don't feel so hungry just now.
Lie down on the pallet beside me,
And lay your cool hand on my brow.
Perhaps I'll forget to be hungry
If you'll tell me that story again,
How God dropped down manna from Heaven
For food for the children of men.

"And tell, me, too, Katie, 'bout mamma,
And her beautiful home in the sky,
Where she'll never be sick or be hungry;
We'll see her there, too, bye and bye.
And papa, poor papa, if only
He could have let brandy alone,
His children would not have been starving,"
Said the child in a tremulous tone.

The children both wept for their father
Who slept in a drunkard's lone grave;
And Katie still held little Eva—
Poor Katie, so unselfish and brave!
Then dear little Eva grew quiet,
And Katie was certain she slept;
So she laid the child down on the pallet,
And down the dark stairway she crept.

Then over the wet icy pavement,
Not heeding the rain or the sleet,
The orphan child sped through the darkness,
Uncovered her head and her feet;

On, on, till she reaches the threshhold
Of the brilliantly lighted saloon;
Then down on her knees, the poor orphan
At the barkeeper's feet craves a boon.

"Oh, please, sir, give me just a penny,
To buy little Eva some bread;
She's up in the attic, so hungry and sick,
With a pallet of straw for a bed.
We've had nothing to eat for three days or more,
I'm afraid little Eva will die."
Her pale slender hands were clasped as she spoke,
A tear-drop stood in her eye.

"Clear out, you young beggar!" the barkeeper said;
"I've no time to listen to you!
What is it to me if you're starving for bread?
I've children at home to see to."
"What is it to you?" the girl exclaimed,
As she clenched her colorless hands,
"You've murdered a father body and soul,
His orphan before you stands.

"My father was loving and kind to us once
As ever a parent could be;
But now he sleeps in a drunkard's grave,
And friendless orphans are we.
'Twas here at your bar he drank his first glass,
Here squandered a fortune away;
Now say, if you dare, 'What is it to me
If his children are starving to-day?'"

"Why, girl, you are mad," the barkeeper said,
As he answered the child with a sneer.

"I'm only earning my daily bread;
The fault's with the people here.
They grant me a license to murder,
If a man is so weak as to buy
The poison I keep in my rum-shop,
So they are to blame more than I."

Then up from her knees rose poor Katie—
She might as well plead with a stone—
As the hard-hearted man whose "good morals"
A license procured from the town.
Then out of the doorway she staggered,
Again through the ice-covered streets
She wearily wends her way homeward—
So hopelessly now her heart beats.

She opened the door, oh so softly,
Lest Eva should wake from her sleep—
Dear Eva! her sufferings were over—
She never will hunger or weep.
For, ah! she had gone to that city
Where hunger and pain are unknown;
And over the face of the sleeper
A smile of pure happiness shone.

WOMAN'S WAYS.

In olden days were model wives
Who never from their hearthstone strayed,
They darned the hose and spun the flax
And garments for their husbands made.

They never sought to rove beyond
The boundaries of the farm:
The pigs they fed, the chickens watched,
Lest they should come to harm.

They kept the garden free from weeds
And hoed the onion beds,
And gathered all the garden seeds
And combed the children's heads.

They milked the cows and made the cheese
And pails of golden butter, too,
And gathered fruit from autumn trees,
Enough to last the winter through.

They'd wash and iron and brew and bake
Till night from early morn;
And clothing for the children make,
And help to plant the corn.

They held the full-fledged geese with head
Pressed closely underneath the arm,
And plucked the down for feather beds,
On wintry nights so soft and warm.

And when the evening meal was o'er,
They'd knit on woolen stockings, gray,
And ne'er were known at eventide
To wander from their homes away.

They never dreamed of doing aught
Of which their spouse might not approve,
Nor ever murmured at their lot
Or made an independent move.

Content in their allotted sphere,
They ne'er usurped their husband's rights;
But had his coffee steaming hot
And slippers warm on winter nights.

But now, alas, those days have fled—
The old-time customs with them;
The model wives must all be dead,
At least we never see them.

The women nowadays seem to think
That they need recreation,
And just as well deserve it, too,
As the lords of the creation.

No more they spin or darn the hose,
Or knit the homely stocking;
They're in the parlor reading, now,
Or painting; oh, how shocking!

'Tis strange, indeed; 'tis very strange
That wives are not contented
To live as in the olden time,
Ere thinking was invented.

But stranger still, it seems to me,
That woman should discover
That she alone account must give
To One who reigns above her.

THE OLD FOLKS' CHRISTMAS.

They sat alone by the hearthstone,
A couple grown feeble and gray,
With the fire-light glimmering 'round them
The night before Christmas day.
His form was thin and drooping,
His forehead seamed with care,
And wrinkled the hand that fondly
Caressed her silvery hair.

Outside the quaint old farm-house,
The night-winds moaned and sighed;
While they talked of the Christmas long ago,
When he brought her home a bride.
"Maggie, do you remember,"
His voice was tender and low,
"That happy, happy Christmas,
Fifty years ago?"

"The sleigh-bells' merry jingle
Rang through the forest wide,
As I brought you home through the woodland,
My bonnie, blushing bride."
"And, John, have you forgotten
Another Christmas morn,
When first we looked on the dimpled face
Of our infant newly born?"

"In after years around our hearth,
The little stockings hung,
And childish voices mingled
With the Christmas carols sung.

And then that sad, sad Christmas,
When the snow lay cold and white
On a little mound in the churchyard
And our home had lost its light."

"Yes, one by one they've left us,
Some for the home above,
And some to gladden the fireside
And the home of one that they love;
And so we're alone once more, John,
No little stockings to fill,
But the children that hung them in years agone,
In mem'ry are with us still."

WANTED—A BOY.

Whose boy shall it be, neighbor,
Yours or mine,
That we'll furnish as grist to the mill?
To the mill that makes drunkards
Our brothers and sons,
And helps the state prison to fill.

Whose boy shall it be, neighbor,
Yours or mine,
That we'll offer a sacrifice
To the god of the wine-cup,
Whose tyranous hand
Demands the young soul as his price?

Whose boy will it be, neighbor,
Yours or mine,
That sooner or later must fill
A drunkard's home and
A drunkard's grave,
Just to furnish the grist for the mill?

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

Christmas bells, oh, Christmas bells!
On the air your music swells,
Till every listening heart is stirred
With the song the shepherds heard;
Angel voices chant again,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"

Christmas bells, glad Christmas bells!
We listen while your chiming tells
Of Bethlehem's Babe, the lowly One,
The Prince of Peace, God's only son.
Down through the ages sounds again
The carol sweet, "Good will to men!"

Throughout our land from east to west,
Gladly proclaim the tidings blest,
Till every nation on the earth
Kneels to the Babe of manger birth.
Peal on the air the glad refrain,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"

Christmas bells, sweet Christmas bells!
O'er hills and vales, o'er plains and dells,
The story sweet, the glad new song,
The listening breezes waft along;
Till human hearts take up the strain,
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"

THE LITTLE BOOTS.

You tell me my attic is littered
With articles useless and old;
And ask why I deem of such value
The rubbish I cherish and hold.

My friend, if you were but a mother,
You'd know how each toy, or each chair,
Brings fresh to my heart the glad mem'ry
Of little ones passed from my care.

There's the cradle that held each wee darling,
With its pillow so dainty and white,
Where nestled the dimpled cheek softly,
As it swung into dreamland each night.

And the carriage where stately as monarchs
They reclined 'mid the cushions so blue,
'Neath the canopy silken and scalloped,
That sheltered from sun and from dew.

Now dusty, alas, are the cushions,
The canopy faded and torn;

And threadbare the gay square of velvet
That the restless small feet have oft worn.

And the little red rocker that's standing
In a corner forgotten and lone,
Brings back to my mem'ry glad hours
When it swung to and fro by my own.

There are picture books tattered and thumb-worn,
There are doll-dresses all out of date;
There's a horn and a drum and a wagon,
There's a primer, a pencil and slate.

There's a sword and a gun and a French harp,
There are marbles and fish-hooks and skates;
And a checker-board battered and splintered,
And two mittens that never were mates.

A lunch-basket minus one handle,
Two caps and an overcoat small;
A calico cat stuffed with cotton,
A purse which is not stuffed at all.

But back in a shadowy corner
Of a shelf on the attic wall,
Half covered with dust and cobwebs,
Stands the dearest treasure of all.

'Tis a pair of small boots so tiny
You'd scarce think the noise they once made,
As they scampered about through the hallway,
Or tracks on the kitchen floor made.

Ah, those dear little boots, how I love them!
Methinks now once more I can see
The curly-haired, dimpled-cheeked darling,
Who showed them so proudly to me.

"Look, mamma, what papa has brought me!
Some new boots just like big boys wear.
Now, I guess I can wade in the water;
If I keep my feet dry you won't care?"

If now I could hear but the clatter
Of those little boots climbing the stair,
I'd think it the sweetest of music
That ever was borne on the air.

But the dear little feet, they have wandered
Out over the threshold of home;
And in vain I now sit in the twilight,
And watch for the children to come.

And the little boots up in the attic,
Stand still all the long summer day;
But they seem to bring back to my mem'ry
The feet that have wandered away.

THE DESERTED WIFE.

I'm longing to-night for the days once so bright,
For the joys that have vanished and fled;
For the tender caress which my life once did bless,
And the light of a love which is dead.

Oh, the vows that we made and the plans that we laid
In the days, happy days long ago,
Are blighted, alas! like the flowers and the grass,
That lie cold 'neath the pitiless snow.

Ah, the joy of those days, how their memory stays
To haunt me with bitter regret,
For the moments so sweet and the pleasures so fleet,
That I'll never, no never, forget;
I thought you were true, and I gave unto you
My heart's fullest measure of love;
But you cared not for me as for others, I see,
And alas, I shared least in your love.

Every harsh, cruel word from your lips I have heard
Its impress has left on my heart;
And the love that's grown cold like a tale that is told,
Was slain by each merciless dart.
And now 'tis in vain I endeavor again
To love and to trust as of yore,
For the faith that has fled, and the love that is dead,
Can brighten our pathway no more.

Oh, the heart may be crushed and its fond pleading hushed,
'Till love fades away in despair;
The lips tell no tale though the cheek may grow pale,
And threaded with silver the hair.
I'm longing to-night for the days once so bright,
For the joys that have vanished and fled—
For the faith and the trust now crumbled to dust,
And the light of a love that is dead.

JUNE.

Oh, sweet is the breath of the roses
That gladden the month of May,
When Nature resplendent with blossoms,
Is decked in her brightest array!

But the month of June is fairer,
That comes as the red rose dies;
June with her royal sunsets,
June with her cloudless skies.

And pleasant it is in the springtime
To hear the hum of bees,
As they hover in search of treasure
Among the blossoming trees.

But now the song of the sickle
Comes up from the meadow-land,
Where rich in their summer fullness,
The fields of clover stand.

The cows, so lazily standing
Knee-deep in the shady pool,
Are envied by all of the children
Released from the village school;

And many a luncheon basket
And book-satchel, too, I'm afraid,
Are hid 'neath the hedge while the owner
Is trying the streamlet to wade.

Take care, little truant, the school-bell
Will ring before you're aware,
And some one might chance to be tardy;
Take care, little truant, take care.

Ah! teacher, don't chide him too harshly
If when the bell taps he's not here;
We're children but once in a lifetime,
There's only one June in a year.

"LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED."

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
Though trials dark arise,
Though grief and sorrow like a cloud
Shut out the sunlit skies.
For just beyond the pearly gates,
A mansion fair for thee awaits.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
Nor let it be afraid;
For in the shadow of the cross,
Thy Savior knelt and prayed;
And all that sorrow means to thee
He tasted in Gethsemane.

Though doubts and fears assail thee,
And tempests 'round thee roar,
Like ocean billows dashing
Upon a rock-bound shore;

Yet He who bade the waves be still,
Can all thy heart with gladness fill.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
Though heavy seems the cross;
Count not earth's cares and trials,
The sorrow and the loss;
For every grief that weighs thee down
Shall be a jewel in thy crown.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
Though long may seem the way,
And heavier to your fainting heart
The burden grows each day.
Thy Savior trod the self-same road,
And bowed beneath a greater load.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
Though breakers 'round thee roll;
Temptations have not power to rend
The anchor from thy soul.
Though surf be dashing at thy feet,
Thy peace and rest shall be complete.

"Let not your heart be troubled,"
The promise is secure,
In that house of many mansions
Thy heritage is sure;
Though floods of woe encompass thee,
His grace shall all sufficient be.

He will not leave thee comfortless,
His peace is with thee still,

If in the changing scenes of life
Thy pleasure is His will.
As naught will seem life's toil and pain
When He in glory comes again.

E'en when the waves of Jordan
Are dashing at thy feet,
They cannot fright thy spirit,
Their melody is sweet.
The terrors of life's closing hour
Are lost in His unfailing power.

WHEN I MISS HER.

I miss her in the morning
When the dew is on the flowers;
When the birds, their matins trilling,
Sweetly sing in leafy bowers;
I remember how she loved them,
Loved the robin and the wren,
And each silver-throated songster
Of the wildwood or the glen.

When the snow-balls and syringas
Don their robes of snowy white,
Then I think of that fair lily
Snatched from longing mortal sight.
She in raiment white is blooming
"Over on the other side,"
Just across the lonely river—
Death's cold river, dark and wide.

Hands that plucked the buds and roses
Just one year ago to-day,
Now are crossed upon her bosom—
Finished all their work and play.
Flowers that seemed to know and love her
Sadly now their branches wave
As they gently bend above her,—
Shed their blossoms o'er her grave.

I miss her in the twilight
Ere the evening lamps are lit,
When the whip-poor-will is calling
And the fitful shadows flit;
And the tears will start unbidden
As I note that empty chair,
And my longing heart seems breaking
'Neath the cross so hard to bear.

But I think I miss my darling
More than any other time,
When the sweet-toned bells are pealing
Out their Sabbath morning chime.
When I see the other children
Start away to Sabbath school,
There to learn their hymns and lessons,
Golden text and golden rule.

Then I think how many Sabbaths,
In the happy days now gone,
She went with the other children,—
Now her brothers go alone!
As I watch them through the gateway,
Tear drops to my eyes will start,

When I miss the little treasure,
Cherished idol of my heart.

Oh, how often Sabbath mornings
Only one short year ago
She would say "Now hurry, mamma,
Fix me up so I can go!
Go to Sun'ay 'chool an' hear them
Sing ' 'Tis Grace' dat pretty song!
Hurry, mamma, firs' bell's goin' to
Ring, I guess, 'fore very long!"

Now that little voice is singing
In the angel choir above,
And perhaps she still remembers
Songs of earth she used to love.
"Jesus Loves Me" and "Bright Mansions,"
"Wonderful Grace," "Sweet Bye and Bye"
Perhaps she sings them in the "Sun'ay 'chool"
She's joined beyond the sky.

SOLDIERS' GRAVES.

Calmly sleeping 'neath the daisies
Blooming o'er a soldier's grave,
With the colors wrapped about him,
Of the flag he died to save,

Many a valiant form is waiting
For the Great Commander's call,

When the sea and earth shall render
Up their treasures, one and all.

Through the blinding snows of winter,
Through the cruel rain and sleet,
On they bravely marched, unheeding
Weary limbs or bleeding feet.

Through the stifling heat of summer,
When the sun with lurid ray,
Shone upon the field of battle
Hour by hour and day by day,

They were fighting for the Union,
Fighting for the cause of right;
Never once their post forsaking
In the hottest of the fight.

Now the weary march is ended,
And the land they died to save
Will hold in grateful memory
Every fallen hero's grave.

As we come with flowers to deck them,
Lilies white, and roses gay,
Some, perhaps, will think of loved ones
In the south land far away,

Sleeping in their graves, neglected,
Where no loving hand will strew
Flowers upon the mounds, where only
Eglantine and violets grow.

Yet I think the all-wise Father
Notes each soldier's unknown grave;
And a conqueror's crown is waiting
For each unknown hero brave.

WOMAN'S LOT.

Over and over again
The self-same tasks to be done,
With never a break in the round of toil
From dawn until setting of sun.
The breakfast, of course, must be cooked,
The dishes put neatly away,
The children got ready for school—
The same things to do every day.

Each room is to sweep and to dust
Although we did that yester-morn;
It's enough to make any one wish
Almost, that she'd never been born.
When the house is in order at last
And nothing to brush or to sweep,
The baby must be washed and dressed
And rocked till he chooses to sleep.

Then before we have time to turn 'round
That heartless old clock will strike ten;
The fire must be lit in the range;
It's time to be cooking again.
The dishes we washed up at morn
Are called into service once more,

And soon they're to stack up again
To be washed and arranged as before.

If by any good fortune or chance
The baby should sleep till they're done,
He's certain to wake up and cry
Ere ever the clock can strike one.
The work basket always is full—
There's darning and mending to do;
And cutting and fitting and turning the goods
To make an old garment look new.

If ever we think we are done
And have a few moments to rest,
One of the boys will be certain to say:
"Here's a button come off my vest!"
Just think of the meals that we cook,
The dishes we wash in a year,
The buttons we sew, the mittens we hunt
As the time for the school bell draws near.

Each day is so nearly the same
In every week of the year,
Do you wonder we sometimes complain,
Or long to step out of our sphere?
If we're always to travel this round,
Every day in the year just alike,
Some morning, perchance, you may find
All the women have gone on a strike.

THE SNOW.

Soft and white the feathery flakes
  Came down through the wintry night,
Till hill and valley and grove and town
  Were clad in spotless white.

The dirty alley or muddy lane
  That blotted the landscape, fair,
No longer obtrudes itself on our gaze,—
  We almost forget that it's there.

The barren field that so gloomy stood
  Since shorn of its waving grain,
Now slumbers low in its frozen sleep
  'Neath a soft white counterpane.

The evergreens, bowed 'neath their weight of snow,
  Gleam white in the morning sun;
And their towering grandeur presents a thought
  Of the Painter,—the Mighty One,

Who, with one touch of His pencil, can change
  Aught that is dark in this world of woe
To a picture of loveliness,—fair to the sight
  And spotless and pure as the beautiful snow.

And when I awoke this morning, and saw
  The earth arrayed in its snowy sheen,
Another fancy came floating to me,—
  And yet it was more than a fancy, I ween.

I thought that the snowflakes were like the kind deeds
That silently fall 'round our pathway below,
From hearts that fulfill the Scripture command
And make no display when their gifts they bestow.

So softly, so gently the snowflakes came down,
Unheard and unseen through the long hours of night,
Till all that was dreary or cheerless or dark
Shone spotless and pure in its raiment of white.

'Tis thus that kind Charity covers each sin
That dims the fair name of the traveler below,
And gently spreads over his garments sin-stained
A mantle as stainless and white as the snow.

MY BABY.

My baby is gone,—my baby is gone!
I listen in vain for the patter of feet
And the lisping tones of a voice so sweet,
And long once more to feel the clasp
Of the dimpled arms around my neck,
As the rosy lips my own would meet.

My baby is gone,—my baby is gone!
The little red cap he used to wear,
A ringlet clipped from his shining hair,
I gaze on oft with tear-dimmed eyes
And breathe a sigh for the olden time,
When my babe was a constant joy and care.

My baby is gone,—my baby is gone!
No more I find on the garden walk,
A broken cart or a doll that can talk;
The kitchen chairs are never turned down,
And the silent walls, alas, no more
Bear finger prints and marks of chalk.

My baby is gone,—my baby is gone!
The swift, sweet years so quickly past,
And my baby boy grew up so fast,
That ere I knew it my little one
Had laid aside his top and drum,
And stepped out into the world at last.

My baby is gone,—ah, woe is me!
For my longing heart seeks everywhere
For the blue-eyed lad with golden hair;
And my empty arms reach out in vain
For the little one they used to clasp,
With the dimpled cheek and the brow so fair.

FETTERED.

One name—the same—they bore through life;
They shared the self-same fireside,
But deeds of strife
'Twixt man and wife
Bore bitter fruit, and love died.

He thought her cold and often told
Her she had wearied of him.
Was she to blame
If doubts the same
Had bade her cease to love him?

Years passed away, and day by day
The gulf 'twixt them grew wider;
'Twas woman's part
To hide her heart
From him who stood beside her.

And in the strife of busy life
His love for her grew colder;
And if e'er a sigh
For the days gone by
Arose, he never told her.

So passed the years; no sighs or tears
E'er told her heart was breaking;
We do not weep
When love lies deep
In the sleep that knows no waking.

The winter's snow and summer's glow
Pass o'er our heads unheeding,
Though days are glad,
Though thoughts be sad,
Though hearts lie torn and bleeding.

Thus, side by side, though severed wide,
They drifted down life's river;
Each welcomed death,
Whose icy breath
They hailed as their deliverer.

LIFE.

If life were done when still, cold hands
Are crossed upon the pulseless breast,
If all were o'er when death-dimmed eyes
Are closed in their unbroken rest,
Well might we shed the burning tear
As, in the anguish of despair,
We stand beside a loved one's bier
And mourn the loss of one so fair.

If life were done when eyes that beamed
With tenderness in days gone by
Are closed in death, their brightness dimmed—
Their beauty veiled from mortal eye—
Well might we say with aching heart,
"'Tis but a mockery to live
When all must yield to Death's fell dart—
Their forms to his embrace must give."

If life were done when willing feet
That oft on loving errand went,
The throbbing heart, whose every beat
With love and kindliness were blent,
Are stilled in death—their mission done,—
Then might we mourn with bitter grief
That friends must leave us one by one—
Might weep that life should be so brief.

But far beyond the shores of time,
Beyond life's billows, tempest driven,

There beams a hope, a joy sublime,
Those cherished ones we'll meet in heaven;
For life with them is just begun,
Earth's prison bars are burst in twain,
Their conflicts o'er their battles won—
In yon bright clime they live again.

VOTE AS YOU PRAY.

The spell of intemperance hangs dark o'er our land,
Destroying our hopes with a pitiless hand,
Blighting the promise of life's early morn,—
Withering the blossom and leaving the thorn.

There is work to be done, there is labor for all,
For the strongholds of darkness and error must fall;
The fiercer the conflict, the brighter the crown,
When King Alcohol vanquished, his sword shall lay down.

The harvest is ready, the Master doth call
For laborers to work ere the dark shadows fall;
Go work in His vineyard while yet it is day,—
Pray for God's blessing, and vote as you pray.

EGYPT.

You may boast of the East, the cultured East,
Where aesthetic souls in rapture feast
On all that is classic, grand or wise
To be found beneath the vaulted skies.
Of course that is all very good in its way,
But Egypt is dearer to me any day.

You may speak of the West, the grand new West,
You may think it of all earth's gardens the best;
But grasshoppers and drought and the cyclone's track
Have driven the home-sick emigrant back
To settle content in the land of his birth,
The loveliest, pleasantest spot on the earth.

You may sing of the South, with its balmy breeze
Sweet with the scent of magnolia trees;
But dearer to me is the valley where grows
The cedar, the maple, the lilac, the rose.
The oak and the sumach and autumn's wild flowers
Are fairer than Florida's tropical bowers.

The song of the red bird is sweeter to me
Than the notes of the nightingale ever could be.
Yes, fondly I cherish the land of my birth,
The dearest and happiest spot on the earth;
And daily I bless the hand of fate
That cast my lot in the Sucker State.

IN MEMORY OF S. B.

Weep not for her; the weeks of pain are ended,
The chilling waves of Death's cold river crossed.
Why should we mourn her flight to yon bright region,—
That refuge sweet to spirits tempest-tossed?

The coming years, perchance may bring us sorrow,
And full may be our cup of grief and woe;
Yet in the fair, the bright Eternal City,
No troubled thought,—no heart-ache can she know.

For us life's rugged path may lengthen,
And thorns and briers pierce the way-worn feet;
For her the light of heaven is shining,—
The path she treads is now a gold-paved street.

EASTER MORN.

Glad Easter morn, thy sacred light
Dispels our fears,—illumes our night!
Death's bonds are burst! Since Christ is risen,
The grave is but a transient prison.
Though in its deep and gloomy shade
Our loved ones must a while be laid,
When sounds the last loud trumpet call,
They'll rise,—they'll come forth, one and all.

The friend we buried long ago,—
The traveler lost 'mid Alpine snow,—
The sailor sleeping 'neath the sea,
The savage in his burial tree,
All, all shall rise at the trumpet's sound;
Shall rise to be condemned or crowned;
Shall rise to walk in heaven's light,
Or face their doom, in deepest night.

The grave shall not forever hold
Our forms in its embrace so cold.
Christ robbed the tomb of its dread fears;
Its power must end with Time's brief years.
For Death its sovereignty must yield,
Nor always its dread scepter wield.
Since He has loosed the bonds of death,
Why should we fear life's closing breath?

For death is but the gate to Heaven,—
A "rest to weary mortals given;"
A "healing balm for suffering saint,"
To home-sick traveler worn and faint
'Tis but the gate to Paradise,
Which, opening, brings before his eyes
A palace, fair, of golden sheen,
And beauties eye hath never seen.

Death is of all its terrors shorn
By Christ this glorious Easter morn;
And in the grave so cold and deep,
We need not fear with him to sleep.

When comes again Immanuel's tread,—
When sea and earth give up their dead,
These forms shall rise arrayed in white,
Shall quit death's gloom for Heaven's glad light.

THE TURTLE-DOVE.

Oh, sweet is the song of the Nightingale,
As he flits through the leafy bowers
And gladdens the night with the mellow refrain
He chants o'er the slumbering flowers.

And the silvery tone of the mocking bird
Perched high on the live-oak tree
Wakes echoes glad through the southern land,
As he carols an ode to the sea.

The forest is filled with beautiful birds,
With songsters in brilliant array,
Who pour out their fullness of innocent joy
In music by night and by day.

But there is one in a quaker dress
Whose plaintive accents I love,—
So modest and neat in his plumage of gray,
The clear-throated sweet Turtle-dove.

No music is sweeter at morn or eve,
To my ears, than his far-away call;
Oh, sweet are the birds of the meadow or grove,
But the dove is the dearest of all.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF AN AGED MINISTER.

Why should we weep when for immortal glory
A faithful soldier lays his armor down?
Why should we grieve when Christ, the Great Commander,
Shall call him home to wear a conqueror's crown?

Why should we murmur when the Master
Has garnered in the ripe and golden sheaves?
Should we repine because the autumn harvest
Has left us less of bloom than withered leaves?

Why should we weep when earthly cares and crosses
No more have power the burdened heart to rend?
Is he not resting, sweetly resting,
In that summer-land where pleasures never end?

Though great our loss,—though sad our hearts and lonely,
Teach us to say, Oh, Lord "Thy will be done!"
Content to know that we shall one day meet him
When life is o'er, our conflict fought and won.

Sweet be thy rest, Oh, laborer in the vineyard!
We would not call you from your blest abode
To share with us life's sorrows and its dangers,—
With weary feet to tread the pilgrim road.

WHEN I WOULD GO.

I would not die in winter;
Methinks it would be sad
To take the last fond look on earth
In icy raiment clad.
I'd watch once more the opening
Of violet and rose,
And see the cherry blossoms fall
As white as Alpine snows.

I would not die in springtime,
While Nature's every voice,
Dispelling shades of sadness
Bids every heart rejoice;—
While all the air is laden
With fragrance of the rose,
And life is full of promise,
We long not for its close.

And who would die in summer,
When fields of golden grain,
And pastures cool with verdure
Envelope hill and plain?
I fain would see the harvest
Secure from winter's cold;
I fain would see each wandering lamb
Brought safe within the fold.

In autumn,—yes, in autumn
I hope to hear the call

That one day, sooner,—later,
On every ear must fall.
Ere winter's icy fingers
Shall chill the fading flowers,
I'd gaze my last on earthly scenes,
And spend life's closing hours.

A CITY BUILT WITH BLOOD.

I dreamt I saw a city
With stately towers and grand,
While crystal fountains playing,
Stood fair on either hand.

The streets were paved with granite,
The town with lights aglow,
While strains of mirth and music
Were wafted to and fro.

Through closed doors came the echo
Of revelry and mirth;
Till swift the avenging angel
Sped noiseless o'er the earth.

And as I gazed in wonder,
Behold a mighty wave
Swept on; the rum-cursed city
Lay in a watery grave.

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"This flood," cried the avenger
"But represents the tears
Of beggared wives and children,—
Rum's conquests through the years."

Again I looked;—a watery waste
Marked where the town once stood;
And darkness, chilling darkness hung
O'er that city built with blood!

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES.

Each succeeding Christmas brings us
More of pain and less of joy,
As life's passing seasons yield us
Less of gold and more alloy.

As our memory flies backward
To each Christmas day gone by,
Many a well loved voice is missing,
Many a vacant chair we spy.

One by one the links that bind us
To this world are rent in twain;
Year by year our Christmas gatherings
Only make the loss more plain.

Every year some voice is silent
Which last Christmas pleasure gave,
And the snowflakes each December
Softly drape a new-made grave.

Yet we love to hear the chiming
Of the merry Christmas bells;
And our hearts grow warmer, lighter
As the joyous chorus swells.

And although some joys have vanished,
Never to return again,
Still each voice may join the carol,
"Peace on earth, good will to men."

YOU MAY NOT PASS AGAIN THIS WAY.

If by kindly word or action,
You can cheer some drooping heart,
Or new zeal and hope and courage
To some saddened life impart;
Then speak that word without delay,
You may not pass again this way.

If on life's tempestuous ocean
You should see a brother's bark
Driven helpless o'er the billows,
Sinking 'neath the water dark,
Oh, lend a helping hand today,
You may not pass again this way.

If a cloud of grief o'ershadows
Some one you have called a friend,

And if you a ray of sunshine
O'er that shadowed life can send,
The call for help at once obey.
You may not pass again this way.

If beside your way there blossoms
Some frail flower with drooping head,
Wilted by the breath of slander,
Crushed beneath the spoiler's tread,
Reclaim the erring while you may;
You cannot pass again this way.

If there's aught of joy or brightness
You can scatter round your path;
Linger not, but haste to lighten
Any woe a brother hath;
For night may fall with shadows gray
Ere you shall pass again this way.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

The flowers that are sweetest and rarest
May wither and fade in a day,
And the treasure the heart holds the dearest
May the soonest be taken away.

As the lily buds opening the fairest
The gardener claims for his own,
Thus the precious buds plucked from our fireside,
Are blooming around the White Throne.

And torn though our hearts be and bleeding,
Grouped cheerless around the hearthstone,
A voice seems to bid us look upward,
The Lord has but taken His own.

And down from the heights of God's mercy
A light cleaves the shadows in twain;
Though lost to us now, precious infant,
In Heaven we'll meet thee again.

THE OLD YEAR.

The old year is passing, is passing away,
As fadeth the sunlight at closing of day;
The changes it brought us
The lessons it taught us
Are all it has left us forever and aye.

Through seasons of gladness and seasons of gloom,
That o'ershadowed the cradle, the altar, the tomb,
When skies have been fairest,
When pleasures were rarest,
It has shown us life's thistles as well as the bloom.

Enshrined in our memories, some days bright and fair
Are followed by seasons of sorrow and care.
Of loving words spoken,
Of warm friendships broken,
The year soon to leave us, has brought us its share.

The New Year, with promise of brightness ahead,
Affords us no warnings of aught we would dread.
The joys that hang o'er us,
The quicksands before us,
Alike are concealed 'round the path we shall tread.

Suppose for one moment the curtain should rise,
The mystical curtain that hides from our eyes
The flowers to bloom 'round us,
The thorns that will wound us,
Would the New Year be greeted with joy or sighs?

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